

The Doctrine of Sanctification



Part One

A. W. Pink



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1. Introduction

In the articles upon “The Doctrine of Justification” we contemplated the transcendent grace of God which provided for His people a Surety, who kept for them perfectly His holy law, and who also endured the curse which was due to their manifold transgressions against it. In consequence thereof, though in ourselves we are criminals who deserve to be brought to the bar of God’s justice and there be sentenced to death, we are, nevertheless, by virtue of the accepted service of our Substitute, not only not condemned, but “justified,” that is, *pronounced righteous* in the high courts of Heaven. Mercy has rejoiced against judgment: yet not without the governmental righteousness of God, as expressed in His Holy law, having been fully glorified. The Son of God incarnate, as the federal head and representative of His people, obeyed it, and also suffered and died under its condemning sentence. The claims of God have been fully met, justice has been magnified, the law has been made more honourable than if every descendant of Adam had personally fulfilled its requirements.

“As respects justifying righteousness, therefore, believers have nothing to do with the law. They are justified ‘apart from it’ (Rom. 3:21), that is, apart from any personal fulfilment thereof. We could neither fulfil its righteousness, nor bear its curse. The claims of the law were met and ended, once and forever, by the satisfaction of our great Substitute, and as a result we have attained to righteousness without works, i.e., without personal obedience of our own. ‘By the obedience of

one shall many be constituted righteous' (Rom. 5:19). There may indeed, and there are, other relations in which we stand to the law. It is the principle of our *new* nature to rejoice in its holiness: 'we delight in the law of God after the inner man.' We know the comprehensiveness and the blessedness of those first two commandments on which all the Law and the Prophets hang: we know that 'love is the fulfilling of the law.' We do not despise the guiding light of the holy and immutable commandments of God, livingly embodied, as they have been, in the ways and character of Jesus; but we do not seek to obey them with any thought of obtaining justification thereby.

"That which has been attained, cannot remain to be attained. Nor do we place so great an indignity on 'the righteousness of our God and Saviour,' as to put the partial and imperfect obedience which we render after we are justified, on a level with that heavenly and perfect righteousness by which we have been justified. After we have been justified, grace may and does for Christ's sake, accept as well-pleasing our imperfect obedience; but this being a consequence of our perfected justification cannot be made a ground thereof. Nor can anything that is in the least degree imperfect, be presented to God with the view of attaining justification. In respect of this, the courts of God admit of nothing that falls short of His own absolute perfectness" (B. W. Newton).

Having, then, dwelt at some length on the basic and blessed truth of Justification, it is fitting that we should now consider the closely connected and complementary doctrine of Sanctification. But what is "sanctification:" is it a quality or position? Is sanctification a legal thing or an experimental? that is to say, Is it something the believer has in Christ or in himself? Is it absolute or relative? by which we mean, Does it admit of degree or no? is it unchanging or progressive? Are we sanctified at the time we are justified, or is sanctification a later blessing? How is this blessing obtained? by something which is done for us, or by us, or both? How may one be assured he has been sanctified: what are the characteristics, the evidences, the fruits? How are

we to distinguish between sanctification by the Father, sanctification by the Son, sanctification by the Spirit, sanctification by faith, sanctification by the Word?

Is there any difference between sanctification and holiness? if so, what? Are sanctification and purification the same thing? Does sanctification relate to the soul, or the body, or both? What position does sanctification occupy in the *order* of Divine blessings? What is the connection between regeneration and sanctification? What is the relation between justification and sanctification? Wherein does sanctification differ from glorification? Exactly what is the place of sanctification in regard to *salvation*: does it precede or follow, or is it an integral part of it? Why is there so much diversity of opinion upon these points, scarcely any two writers treating of this subject in the same manner. Our purpose here is not simply to multiply questions but to indicate the many sidedness of our present theme, and to intimate the various avenues of approach to the study of it.

Diversive indeed have been the answers returned to the above questions. Many who were ill-qualified for such a task have undertaken to write upon this weighty and difficult theme, rushing in where wiser men feared to tread. Others have superficially examined this subject through the coloured glasses of creedal attachment. Others, without any painstaking efforts of their own, have merely echoed predecessors who they supposed gave out, the truth thereon. Though the present writer has been studying this subject off and on for upwards of twenty-five years, he has felt himself to be too immature and too unspiritual to write at length thereon; and even now, it is (he trusts) with fear and trembling he essays to do so: may it please the Holy Spirit to so guide his thoughts that he may be preserved from everything which would pervert the Truth, dishonour God, or mislead His people.

We have in our library discourses on this subject and treatises on this theme by over fifty different men, ancient and modern, ranging from hyper-Calvinists to ultra-Arminians, and a number

who would not care to be listed under either. Some speak with pontifical dogmatism, others with reverent caution, a few with humble diffidence. All of them have been carefully digested by us and diligently compared on the leading points. The present writer detests sectarianism (most of all in those who are the worst affected by it, while pretending to be opposed to it), and earnestly desires to be delivered from partisanship. He seeks to be profited from the labours of all, and freely acknowledges his indebtedness to men of various creeds and schools of thought. On some aspects of *this* subject he has found the Plymouth Brethren much more helpful than the Reformers and the Puritans.

The great importance of our present theme is evidenced by the prominence which is given to it in Scripture: the words “holy, sanctified” etc., occurring therein hundreds of times. Its importance also appears from the high value ascribed to it: it is the supreme glory of God, of the unfallen angels, of the Church. In Exod. 15:11 we read that the Lord God is “glorious in holiness”—that is His crowning excellency. In Matt. 25:31 mention is made of the “holy angels,” for no higher honour can be ascribed them. In Eph. 5:26, 27 we learn that the Church’s glory lieth not in pomp and outward adornment, but in holiness. Its importance further appears in that *this* is the aim in all God’s dispensations. He elected His people that they should be “holy” (Eph. 1:4); Christ died that He might “sanctify” His people (Heb. 13:12); chastisements are sent that we might be “partakers of God’s holiness” (Heb. 12:10).

Whatever sanctification be, it is the great promise of the covenant made to Christ for His people. As Thos. Boston well said, “Among the rest of that kind, it shines like the moon among the lesser stars—as the very chief subordinate end of the Covenant of Grace, standing therein next to the glory of God, which is the chief and ultimate end thereof. The promise of preservation, of the Spirit, of quickening the dead soul, of faith, of justification, of reconciliation, of adoption, and of the enjoyment of God as our God, do tend unto it as their common

centre, and stand related to it as means to their end. They are all accomplished to sinners on design to *make them holy*.” This is abundantly clear from, “The oath which He swear to our father Abraham: that He would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life” (Luke 1:73-75). In that “oath” or covenant, sworn to Abraham as a type of Christ (our spiritual Father: Heb. 2:13), His seed’s serving the Lord in holiness is held forth as the *chief* thing sworn unto the Mediator—deliverance from their spiritual enemies being a means to that end.

The supreme excellency of sanctification is affirmed in Prov. 8:11, “For wisdom is better than rubies; and all things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.” “Everyone who has read the book of Proverbs with any attention must have observed that Solomon means by ‘wisdom’ *holiness*, and by ‘folly’ *sin*; by a wise man a saint, and by a fool a sinner. ‘The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools’ (Prov. 13:35): who can doubt whether by ‘the wise’ he means *saints*, and by ‘fools’ *sinner*! ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom’ (Prov. 9:10), by which he means to assert that true ‘wisdom’ is true piety or real holiness. Holiness, then, is ‘better than rubies,’ and all things that are to be desired are not to be compared with it. It is hard to conceive how the inestimable worth and excellency of holiness could be painted in brighter colours than by comparing it to rubies—the richest and most beautiful objects in nature” (N. Emmons).

Not only is true sanctification an important, essential, and unspeakably precious thing, it is wholly *supernatural*. “It is our duty to enquire into the nature of evangelical holiness, as it is a fruit or effect in us of the Spirit of sanctification, because it is abstruse and mysterious, and undiscernible unto the eye of carnal reason. We say of it in some sense as Job of wisdom, ‘whence cometh wisdom, and where is the place of understanding, seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living, and kept close from the fowls of heaven; destruction and death say,

We have heard the fame thereof with our ears: God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding’ (28:20-23, 28). This is that wisdom whose ways, residence, and paths, are so hidden from the natural reason and understandings of men.

“No man, I say, by mere sight and conduct can know and understand aright the true nature of evangelical holiness; and it is, therefore, no wonder if the doctrine of it be despised by many as an enthusiastical fancy. It is of the things of the Spirit of God, yea, it is the principal effect of all His operation in us and towards us. And ‘these things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God’ (1 Cor. 2:11). It is by Him alone that we are enabled to ‘know the things that are freely given unto us of God’ (verse 12) as this is, if ever we receive anything of Him in this world, or shall do so to eternity. ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him:’ the comprehension of these things is not the work of any of our natural faculties, but ‘God reveals them unto us by His Spirit’ (verses 9, 10).

“Believers themselves are oft-times much unacquainted with it, either as to their apprehension of its true nature, causes, and effects, or, at least, as to their *own interests* and concernment therein. As we know not of ourselves, the things that are wrought in us of the Spirit of God, so we seldom attend as we ought unto His instruction of us in them. It may seem strange indeed, that, whereas all believers are sanctified and made holy, they should not understand nor apprehend what is wrought in them and for them, and what abideth with them: but, alas, how little do we know of ourselves, of what we are, and whence are our powers and faculties even in things natural. Do we know how the members of the body are fashioned in the womb?” (John Owen)

Clear proof that true sanctification is wholly supernatural and altogether beyond the ken of the unregenerate, is found in the fact that so many are thoroughly deceived and fatally deluded by

fleshly imitations and Satanic substitutes of real holiness. It would be outside our present scope to describe in detail the various pretensions which pose as Gospel holiness, but the poor Papists, taught to look up to the “saints” canonized by their “church,” are by no means the only ones who are misled in this vital matter. Were it not that God’s Word reveals so clearly the power of that darkness which rests on the understanding of all who are not taught by the Spirit, it would be surprising beyond words to see so many intelligent people supposing that holiness consists in abstinence from human comforts, garbing themselves in mean attire, and practicing various austerities which God has never commanded.

Spiritual sanctification can only be rightly apprehended from what God has been pleased to reveal thereon in His holy Word, and can only be experimentally known by the gracious operations of the Holy Spirit. We can arrive at no accurate conceptions of this blessed subject except as our thoughts are formed by the teaching of Scripture, and we can only experience the power of the same as the Inspirer of those Scriptures is pleased to write them upon our hearts. Nor can we obtain so much as a correct idea of the meaning of the term “sanctification” by limiting our attention to a few verses in which the word is found, or even to a whole class of passages of a similar nature: there must be a painstaking examination of *every* occurrence of the term and also of its cognates; only thus shall we be preserved from the entertaining of a one-sided, inadequate, and misleading view of its fullness and many-sidedness.

Even a superficial examination of the Scriptures will reveal that holiness is *the opposite of sin*, yet the realization of this at once conducts us into the realm of mystery, for how can persons be sinful and holy at one and the same time? It is *this* difficulty which so deeply exercises the true saints: they perceive in themselves so much carnality, filth, and vileness, that they find it almost impossible to believe that they are holy. Nor is the difficulty solved here, as it was in justification, by saying,

Though we are completely unholy in ourselves, we *are* holy in *Christ*. We must not here anticipate the ground which we hope to cover, except to say, the Word of God clearly teaches that those who have been sanctified by God *are* holy *in themselves*. The Lord graciously prepare our hearts for what is to follow.

2. Its Meaning

Having dwelt at some length upon the relative or legal change which takes place in the *status* of God's people at justification, it is fitting that we should now proceed to consider the real and experimental change that takes place in their *state*, which change is begun at their sanctification and made perfect in glory. Though the justification and the sanctification of the believing sinner may be, and should be, contemplated singly and distinctively, yet they are inseparably connected, God never bestowing the one without the other; in fact we have no way or means whatsoever of knowing the former apart from the latter. In seeking to arrive at the meaning of the second, it will therefore be of help to examine its relation to the first. "These individual companions, sanctification and justification, must not be disjoined: under the law the ablutions and oblations went together, the washings and the sacrifices" (Thomas Manton).

There are two principal effects that sin produces, which cannot be separated: the filthy defilement it causes, the awful guilt it entails. Thus, salvation from sin necessarily requires both a cleansing and a clearing of the one who is to be saved. Again; there are two things absolutely indispensable in order for any creature to dwell with God in heaven: a valid title to that inheritance, a personal fitness to enjoy such blessedness—the one is given in justification, the other is commenced in sanctification. The inseparability of the two things is brought out in, "In the Lord have I righteousness and strength" (Isa. 45:24); "but of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30); "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified" (1 Cor. 6:11); "If we confess our

sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, *and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9).

“These blessings walk hand in hand; and never were, never will be, never can be parted. No more than the delicious scent can be separated from the beautiful bloom of the rose or carnation: let the flower be expanded, and the fragrance transpires. Try if you can separate gravity from the stone or heat from the fire. If these bodies and their essential properties, if these causes and their necessary effects, are indissolubly connected, so are our justification and our sanctification” (James Hervey, 1770).

“Like as Adam alone did personally break the first covenant by the all-ruining offence, yet they to whom his guilt is imputed, do thereupon become inherently sinful, through the corruption of nature conveyed to them from him; so Christ alone did perform the condition of the second covenant, and those to whom His righteousness is imputed, do thereupon become inherently righteous, through inherent grace communicated to them from Him by the Spirit. ‘For as by one man’s offence death reigned by one, much more they which receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ’ (Rom. 5:17). How did death reign by Adam’s offence? Not only in point of guilt, whereby his posterity were bound over to destruction, but also in point of their being dead to all good, dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore the receivers of the gift of righteousness must thereby be brought to reign in life, not only legally in justification, but also morally in sanctification” (Thomas Boston, 1690).

Though absolutely inseparable, yet these two great blessings of Divine grace are quite distinct. In sanctification something is actually *imparted* to us, in justification it is only *imputed*. Justification is based entirely upon the work Christ wrought *for* us, sanctification is principally a work wrought *in* us. Justification respects its object in a legal sense and terminates in a relative change—a deliverance from punishment, a right to the reward; sanctification regards its object in a moral sense, and

terminates in an experimental change both in character and conduct—imparting a love for God, a capacity to worship Him acceptably, and a meetness for heaven. Justification is by a righteousness without us, sanctification is by a holiness wrought in us. Justification is by Christ as Priest, and has regard to the penalty of sin; sanctification is by Christ as King, and has regard to the dominion of sin: the former cancels its damning power, the latter delivers from its reigning power.

They differ, then, in their *order* (not of time, but in their nature), justification preceding, sanctification following: the sinner is pardoned and restored to God's favour before the Spirit is given to renew him after His image. They differ in their *design*: justification removes the obligation unto punishment; sanctification cleanses from pollution. They differ in their *form*: justification is a judicial act, by which the sinner is pronounced righteous; sanctification is a moral work, by which the sinner is made holy: the one has to do solely with our standing before God, the other chiefly concerns our state. They differ in their *cause*: the one issuing from the merits of Christ's satisfaction, the other proceeding from the efficacy of the same. They differ in their *end*: the one bestowing a title to everlasting glory, the other being the highway which conducts us thither. "And an highway shall be there ... and it shall be called The way of holiness" (Isa. 35:8).

The words "holiness" and "sanctification" are used in our English Bible to represent one and the same word in the Hebrew and Greek originals, but they are by no means used with a uniform signification, being employed with quite a varied latitude and scope. Hence it is hardly to be wondered at that theologians have framed so many different definitions of its meaning. Among them we may cite the following, each of which, save the last, having an element of truth in them. "Sanctification is God-likeness, or being renewed after His image." "Holiness is conformity to the law of God, in heart and life. Sanctification is a freedom from the tyranny of sin, into the liberty of righteousness." "Sanctification is that work of the

Spirit whereby we are fitted to be worshippers of God.” “Holiness is a process of cleansing from the pollution of sin.” “It is a moral renovation of our natures whereby they are made more and more like Christ.” “Sanctification is the total eradication of the carnal nature, so that sinless perfection is attained in this life.”

Another class of writers, held in high repute in certain circles, and whose works now have a wide circulation, have formed a faulty, or at least very inadequate, definition of the word “sanctify,” through limiting themselves to a certain class of passages where the term occurs and making deductions from only one set of facts. For example: not a few have cited verse after verse in the Old Testament where the word “holy” is applied to inanimate objects, like the vessels of the tabernacle, and then have argued that the term itself cannot possess a *moral* value. But that is false reasoning: it would be like saying that because we read of the “everlasting hills” (Gen. 49:26) and the “everlasting mountains” (Hab. 3:6) that therefore *God* cannot be everlasting—which is the line of logic (?) employed by many of the Universalists so as to set aside the truth of the everlasting punishment of the wicked.

Words *must* first be used of *material* objects before we are ready to employ them in a higher and abstract sense. All our ideas are admitted through the medium of the physical senses, and consequently refer in the first place to external objects; but as the intellect develops we apply those names, given to material things, unto those which are immaterial. In the earliest stages of human history, God dealt with His people according to this principle. It is true that God’s sanctifying of the sabbath day teaches us that the first meaning of the word is “to set apart,” but to argue from this that the term *never* has a moral force when it is applied to moral agents is not worthy of being called “reasoning”—it is a mere begging of the question: as well argue that since in a majority of passages “baptism” has reference to the immersion of a person in water, it can never have a mystical or spiritual force and value—which is contradicted by Luke

12:50; 1 Corinthians 12:13.

The outward ceremonies prescribed by God to the Hebrews with regard to their external form of religious service were all designed to teach corresponding inward duties, and to show the obligation unto moral virtues. But so determined are many of our moderns to empty the word “sanctify” of all moral value, they quote such verses as “for their sakes I sanctify Myself” (John 17:19); and inasmuch as there was no sin in the Lord Jesus from which He needed cleansing, have triumphantly concluded that the thought of moral purification *cannot* enter into the meaning of the word when it is applied to His people. This also is a serious error—what the lawyers would call “special pleading:” with just as much reason might we insist that the word “tempt” can never signify to solicit and incline to evil, because it cannot mean *that* when used of Christ in Matthew 4:1; Hebrews 4:15!

The only satisfactory way of ascertaining the meaning or meanings of the word “sanctify” is to carefully examine every passage in which it is found in Holy Writ, studying its setting, weighing any term with which it is contrasted, observing the objects or persons to which it is applied. This calls for much patience and care, yet only thus do we obey that exhortation “prove all things” (1 Thess. 5:21). That this term denotes more than simply “to separate” or “set apart,” is clear from Num. 6:8 where it is said of the Nazarite, “all the days of his separation he is *holy* unto the Lord,” for according to some that would merely signify “all the days of his separation he is *separated* unto the Lord,” which would be meaningless tautology. So again, of the Lord Jesus we are told, that He was “*holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*” (Heb. 7:26), which shows that “holy” means something more than “separation.”

That the word “sanctify” (or “holy”—the *same* Hebrew or Greek term) is far from being used in a uniform sense is clear from the following passages. In Isaiah 66:17 it is said of certain wicked men, “They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating

swine's flesh." In Isaiah 13:3 God said of the Medes, whom He had appointed to overthrow the Babylonian empire, "I have commanded My sanctified ones, I have also called My mighty ones, for Mine anger." When applied to God Himself, the term denotes His ineffable majesty, "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy" (Isa. 57:15 and compare with Psa. 99:3; Hab. 3:3). It also includes the thought of adorning and equipping: "thou shalt anoint it to sanctify it" (Exod. 29:36 and compare with 40:11); "anoint him to sanctify him" (Lev. 8:12 and compare with verse 30), "If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified *and meet for the Master's use*" (2 Tim. 2:21).

That the word "holy" or "sanctify" has in many passages a reference to a *moral quality* is clear from such verses as the following: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12)—each of those predicates are moral qualities. Among the identifying marks of a scriptural bishop are that he must be "a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Titus 1:8) each of those are moral qualities, and the very connection in which the term "holy" is there found proves conclusively it means much more than an external setting apart. "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Rom. 6:19): here the word "holiness" is used antithetically to "uncleanness." So again in 1 Corinthians 7:14, "else were your children *unclean*, but now are they *holy*" i.e. maritally pure.

That sanctification includes *cleansing* is clear from many considerations. It may be seen in the types, "Go unto the people, and *sanctify* them today, and tomorrow, and let them *wash* their clothes" (Exod. 19:10)—the latter being an emblem of the former. As we have seen in Romans 6:19 and 1 Corinthians 7:14, it is *the opposite of* "uncleanness." So also in 2 Timothy 2:2! the servant of God is to *purge* himself from "the vessels of dishonour" (worldly, fleshly, and apostate preachers and

churches) if he is to be “sanctified” and “meet for the Master’s use.” In Ephesians 5:26 we are told that Christ gave Himself for the Church, “that he might *sanctify and cleanse it,*” and that, in order that He “might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but (in contrast from such blemishes) that it should be *holy*” (verse 27). “If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh” (Heb. 9:13): what could be plainer!—ceremonial sanctification under the law was secured by a process of *purification or cleansing*.

“Purification is the first proper notion of internal real sanctification. To be unclean absolutely, and to be holy, are universally opposed. Not to be purged from sin, is an expression of an unholy person, as to be cleansed is of him that is holy. This purification is ascribed unto all the causes and means of sanctification. Not that sanctification consists wholly herein, but firstly and necessarily it is required thereunto: ‘I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you!’ (Ezek. 36:25). That this sprinkling of clean water upon us, is the communication of the Spirit unto us for the end designed, I have before evinced. It hath also been declared wherefore He is called ‘water’ or compared thereunto. The next verse shows expressly that it is the Spirit of God which is intended: ‘I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes.’ And that which He is thus in the first place promised for, is the cleansing of us from the pollution of sin, which in order of nature, is proposed unto His enabling us to walk in God’s statutes” (John Owen).

To sanctify, then, means in the great majority of instances, to appoint, dedicate or set apart unto God, for a holy and special use. Yet that act of separation is not a bare change of situation, so to speak, but is preceded or accompanied by a work which (ceremonially or experimentally) *fits* the person for God. Thus the priests in their sanctification (Lev. 8) were sanctified by washing in water (type of regeneration: Titus 3:5), having the

blood applied to their persons (type of justification: Rom. 5:9), and being anointed with oil (type of receiving the Holy Spirit: 1 John 2:20, 27). As the term is applied to Christians it is used to designate three things, or three parts of one whole: first, the *process* of setting them apart unto God or constituting them holy: Hebrews 13:12; 2 Thessalonians 2:13. Second, the *state* or condition of holy separation into which they are brought: 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 4:24. Third, the personal sanctity or holy *living* which proceeds from the state: Luke 1:75; 1 Peter 1:15.

To revert again to the Old Testament types—which are generally the best interpreters of the doctrinal statements of the New Testament, providing we carefully bear in mind that the antitype is always of a higher order and superior nature to what prefigured it, as the substance must excel the shadow, the inward and spiritual surpassing the merely outward and ceremonial. “Sanctify unto Me all the firstborn . . . *it is Mine*” (Exod 13:2). This comes immediately after the deliverance of the firstborn by the blood of the paschal lamb in the preceding chapter: first justification, and then sanctification as the complementary parts of one whole. “Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean: and ye shall not make your souls abominable by beast, or by fowl, or by any manner of living thing that creepeth on the ground, which I have separated from you as unclean. And ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be Mine” (Lev. 20:25, 26). Here we see there was a separation from all that is unclean, with an unreserved and exclusive devotement to the Lord.

3. Its Necessity

It is our earnest desire to write this article not in a theological or merely abstract way, but in a *practical* manner: in such a strain that it may please the Lord to speak through it to our needy hearts and search our torpid consciences. It is a most

important branch of our subject, yet one from which we are prone to shrink, being very unpalatable to the flesh. Having been shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin (Psa. 51:5), our hearts *naturally* hate holiness, being opposed to any experimental acquaintance with the same. As the Lord Jesus told the religious leaders of His day, “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light” (John 3:19), which may justly be paraphrased “men loved sin rather than holiness,” for in Scripture “darkness” is the emblem of sin the Evil one being denominated “the power of darkness”—as “light” is the emblem of the ineffably Holy One (1 John 1:5).

But though by nature man is opposed to the Light, it is written, “Follow peace with all, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Heb. 12:14). To the same effect the Lord Jesus declared “Blessed are the pure in heart, for *they* shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). *God will not call unto nearness with Himself those who are carnal and corrupt.* “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3): what concord can there be between an unholy soul and the thrice holy God? Our God is “glorious in holiness” (Exod. 15:11), and therefore those whom He separates unto Himself must be suited to Himself, and be made “partakers of His holiness” (Heb. 12:10). The whole of His ways with man exhibit this principle, and His Word continually proclaims that He is “not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with Him” (Psa. 5:4).

By our fall in Adam we lost not only the favour of God, but also the purity of our natures, and therefore we need to be both reconciled to God and sanctified in our inner man. There is now a spiritual leprosy spread over all our nature which makes us loathsome to God and puts us into a state of separation from Him. No matter what pains the sinner takes to be rid of his horrible disease, he does but hide and not cleanse it. Adam concealed neither his nakedness nor the shame of it by his fig-leaf contrivance; so those who have no other covering for their natural filthiness than the externals of religion rather proclaim than hide it. Make no mistake on this score: neither the outward

profession of Christianity nor the doing of a few good works will give us access to the thrice Holy One. Unless we are washed by the Holy Spirit, and in the blood of Christ, from our native pollutions, we cannot enter the kingdom of glory.

Alas, with what *forms of godliness*, outward appearances, external embellishments are most people satisfied. How they mistake the shadows for the substance, the means for the end itself. How many devout Laodiceans are there who *know not* that they are “wretched and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked” (Rev. 3:17). No preaching affects them, nothing will bring them to exclaim with the prophet, “O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to Thee my God” (Ezra 9:6). No, if they do but preserve themselves from the known guilt of such sins as are punishable among men, to all other things their conscience seems dead: they have no inward shame for anything between their souls and God, especially not for the depravity and defilement of their natures: of *that* they know, feel, bewail nothing.

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness” (Prov. 30:12). Although they had never been cleansed by the Holy Spirit, nor their hearts purified by faith, (Acts 15:9), yet they esteemed themselves to be pure, and had not the least sense of their foul defilement. Such a generation were the self-righteous Pharisees of Christ’s day: they were constantly cleansing their hands and cups, engaged in an interminable round of ceremonial washings, yet were they thoroughly ignorant of the fact that *within* they were filled with all manner of defilement (Matt. 23:25-28). So is a generation of churchgoers today; they are orthodox in their views, reverent in their demeanour, regular in their contributions, *but they make no conscience of the state of their hearts.*

That sanctification or personal holiness which we here desire to show the absolute necessity of, lies in or consists of three things. First, that internal change or renovation of our souls, whereby our minds, affections and wills are brought into

harmony with God. Second, that impartial compliance with the revealed will of God in all duties of obedience and abstinence from evil, issuing from a principle of faith and love. Third, that directing of all our actions unto the glory of God, by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel. This, and nothing short of this, is evangelical and saving sanctification. *The heart must be changed so as to be brought into conformity with God's nature and will:* its motives, desires, thoughts and actions require to be purified. There must be a spirit of holiness working within so as to sanctify our outward performances if they are to be acceptable unto Him in whom "there is no darkness at all."

Evangelical holiness consists not only in external works of piety and charity, but in pure thoughts, impulses and affections of the soul, chiefly in that disinterested love from which all good works must flow if they are to receive the approbation of Heaven. Not only must there be an abstinence from the execution of sinful lusts, but *there must be a loving and delighting to do the will of God in a cheerful manner*, obeying Him without repining or grudging against any duty, as if it were a grievous yoke to be borne. Evangelical sanctification is that holiness of heart which causes us to love God supremely, so as to yield ourselves wholly up to His constant service in all things, and to His disposal of us as our absolute Lord, whether it be for prosperity or adversity, for life or death; and to love our neighbours as ourselves.

This entire sanctification of our whole inner and outer man is absolutely indispensable. As there must be a change of *state* before there can be of life—"make the tree good, and his fruit (will be) good" (Matt. 12:33)—so there must be sanctification before there can be glorification. Unless we are purged from the pollution of sin, we can never be fit for communion with God. "And there shall in no wise enter into it (the eternal dwelling place of God and His people) anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination" (Rev. 21:27). "To suppose that an unpurged sinner can be brought into the blessed enjoyment of God, is to overthrow both the law and the Gospel,

and to say that Christ died in vain” (John Owen, Volume 2: page 511). Personal holiness is equally imperative as is the forgiveness of sins in order to eternal bliss.

Plain and convincing as should be the above statements, there is a class of professing Christians who wish to regard the justification of the believer as constituting almost the whole of his salvation, instead of its being only one aspect thereof. Such people delight to dwell upon the imputed righteousness of Christ, but they evince little or no concern about personal holiness. On the other hand, there are not a few who in their reaction from a one sided emphasis upon justification by grace through faith alone, have gone to the opposite extreme, making sanctification the sum and substance of all their thinking and preaching. Let it be solemnly realized that while a man may learn thoroughly the scriptural doctrine of justification and yet not be *himself* justified before God, so he may be able to detect the crudities and errors of “the Holiness people,” and yet be completely unsanctified himself. But it is chiefly the first of these two errors we now desire to expose, and we cannot do better than quote at length from one who has most helpfully dealt with it.

“We are to look upon holiness as a very necessary *part of* that *salvation* that is received by faith in Christ. Some are so drenched in a covenant of works, that they accuse us for making good works needless to salvation, if we will not acknowledge them to be necessary, either as *conditions to procure* an interest in Christ, or as *preparatives to fit us* for receiving Him by faith. And others, when they are taught by the Scriptures that we are saved by faith, even by faith without works, do begin to disregard all obedience to the law as not at all necessary to salvation, and do account themselves obliged to it only in point of gratitude; if it be wholly neglected, they doubt not but free grace will save them nevertheless. Yea, some are given up to such strong Antinomian delusions, that they account it a part of the liberty from bondage of the law purchased by the blood of Christ, to make no conscience of breaking the law in their

conduct.

“One cause of these errors that are so contrary one to the other is that many are prone to imagine nothing else to be meant by ‘salvation’ but to be delivered from Hell, and to enjoy heavenly happiness and glory; hence they conclude that, if good works be *a means of glorification*, and precedent to it, they must also be a precedent means of our *whole* salvation, and if they be not a necessary means of our *whole* salvation, they are not at all necessary to glorification. But though ‘salvation’ be often taken in Scripture *by way of eminency* for its perfection in the state of heavenly glory, yet, according to its full and *proper* signification, we are to understand by it all that freedom from the evil of our natural corrupt state, and all those holy and happy enjoyments that we receive from Christ our Saviour, either in this world by faith, or in the world to come by glorification. Thus, justification, the gift of the Spirit to dwell in us, the privilege of adoption (deliverance from the reigning power of indwelling sin. A. W. Pink) are *parts of* our ‘salvation’ which we partake of in this life. Thus also, the conformity of our hearts to the law of God, and the fruits of righteousness with which we are filled by Jesus Christ in this life, are *a necessary part of* our ‘salvation.’

“God saveth us from our sinful uncleanness *here*, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:29; Titus 3:5), as well as from Hell hereafter. Christ was called Jesus, i.e., a Saviour: because He saves His people from their sins (Matt 1:21). Therefore, deliverance from our sins *is part of* our ‘salvation,’ which is begun in this life by justification and sanctification, and perfected by glorification in the life to come. Can we rationally doubt whether it be any proper part of our salvation by Christ to be quickened, so as to be enabled to live to God, when we were by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and to have the image of God in holiness and righteousness restored to us, which we lost by the fall; and to be freed from a vile dishonourable slavery to Satan and our own lusts, and made the servants of God; and to be honoured so highly as to walk by

the Spirit, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit? and what is all this but holiness in heart and life?

“Conclude we, then, that holiness in this life *is absolutely necessary to salvation*, not only as a means to the end, but by a nobler kind of necessity—as part of the end itself. Though we are not saved by good works as *Procurring causes*, yet we are saved to good works, as fruits and effects of saving grace, ‘which God hath prepared that we should walk in them’ (Eph. 2:10). It is, indeed, one part of our salvation to be delivered from the bondage of the covenant of works; but the end of this is, not that we may have liberty to sin (which is the worst of slavery) but that we may fulfil the royal law of liberty, and that ‘we may serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter’ (Gal. 5:13; Rom. 7:6). Yea, holiness in this life is such a *part of our ‘salvation’* that it is *a necessary means* to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in heavenly light and glory: for without holiness we can never see God (Heb. 12:14), and are as unfit for His glorious presence as swine for the presence-chamber of an earthly king.

“The last thing to be noted in this direction is that holiness of heart and life is to be sought for earnestly *by faith* as a very necessary part of our ‘salvation.’ Great multitudes of ignorant people that live under the Gospel, harden their hearts in sin and ruin their souls forever, by trusting on Christ for such an *imaginary ‘salvation’* as consisteth not at all in *holiness*, but only in forgiveness of sin and deliverance from everlasting torments. They would be free from the *Punishments* due to sin, but they love their lusts so well that they hate holiness and desire not to be saved from the *service* of sin. The way to oppose this pernicious delusion is not to deny, as some do, that trusting on Christ for salvation is a saving act of faith, but rather to show that *none do* or can trust on Christ for *true ‘salvation’* except they trust on Him *for holiness*, neither do they heartily desire true salvation, if they do not desire to be made holy and righteous in their hearts and lives. If ever God and Christ gave you ‘salvation’, *holiness will be one part of it*; if Christ wash

you not from the filth of your sins, you have no part with Him (John 13:8).

“What a strange kind of salvation do they desire that care not for holiness! They would be saved and yet be altogether dead in sin, aliens from the life of God, bereft of the image of God, deformed by the image of Satan, his slaves and vassals to their own filthy lusts, utterly unmeet for the enjoyment of God in glory. Such a salvation as that was never purchased by the blood of Christ; and those that seek it abuse the grace of God in Christ, and turn it into lasciviousness. They would be saved by Christ, and yet be *out* of Christ in a fleshly state; whereas God doth free none from condemnation but those that are in Christ, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit; or else they would divide Christ, and take a part of His salvation and leave out the rest; but Christ is not divided (1 Cor. 1:13). They would have their sins forgiven, not that they may walk with God in love, in time to come, but that they may practice their enmity against Him without any fear of punishment. But let them not be deceived, God is not mocked. *They understand not what true salvation is*, neither were they ever yet thoroughly sensible of their lost estate, and of the great evil of sin; and that which they trust on Christ for is but an imagination of their own brains; and therefore their trusting is gross presumption.

“The Gospel-faith maketh us to come to Christ with a thirsty appetite that we may drink of living water, even of His sanctifying Spirit (John 7:37, 38), and cry out earnestly to Him to save us, not only from Hell, but from sin, saying, ‘Teach us to do Thy will; Thy Spirit is good’ (Psa. 143:10); ‘Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned’ (Jer. 31:18); ‘Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me’ (Psa. 51:10). This is the way whereby the doctrine of salvation by grace doth necessitate us to holiness of life, by constraining us to seek for it by faith in Christ, *as a substantial part of* that ‘salvation’ which is freely given to us through Christ” (Walter Marshall, 1692).

The above is a much longer quotation than we usually make from others, but we could not abbreviate without losing much of

its force. We have given it, not only because it is one of the clearest and strongest statements we have met with, but because it will indicate that the doctrine we are advancing is no novel One of our own, but one which was much insisted upon by the Puritans. Alas, that so few today have any real scriptural apprehension of what *Salvation* really is; alas that many preachers are substituting an imaginary ‘salvation’ which is fatally deceiving the great majority of their hearers. Make no mistake upon this point, dear reader, we beg you: if your heart is yet un sanctified, you are still unsaved; and if you *pant not after personal holiness*, then you are without any real desire for *God’s* salvation.

The Salvation which Christ purchased for His people includes both justification and sanctification. The Lord Jesus saves not only from the guilt and penalty of sin, but from the power and pollution of it. Where there is a genuine longing to be freed from the love of sin, there is a true desire for *His* salvation; but where there is no practical deliverance from the service of sin, then we are strangers to His saving grace. Christ came here to “Perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant: the oath which He swear to our father Abraham; that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life” (Luke 1:72-75). It is *by this* we are to test or measure ourselves: *are we* serving Him “in holiness and righteousness?” If we are not, we have not been sanctified; and if we are un sanctified, we are none of His.

In the first part of our treatment of the necessity of sanctification it was shown that, the making of a sinner holy is indispensable unto his salvation, yea, that sanctification is an integral part of salvation itself. One of the most serious defects in modern ministry is the ignoring of this basic fact. Of only too many present-day “converts” does it have to be said, “Ephraim is a cake not turned” (Hos. 7:8)—browned underneath, unbaked on the top. Christ is set forth as a fire-escape from Hell, but not

as the great Physician to deal with the malady of indwelling sin, and to fit for Heaven. Much is said upon how to obtain forgiveness of sins, but little is preached on how to be cleansed from its pollutions. The necessity for His atoning blood is set forth, but not the indispensability of experimental holiness. Consequently, thousands who mentally assent to the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, know nothing about heart purity.

Again; there is a woeful disproportion between the place which is given to faith and the emphasis which the Scriptures give to that obedience which flows from sanctification. It is not only true that "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6), but it is equally true that without holiness "no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). Not only are we told "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal. 6:15), but it is also written, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Cor. 7:19). It is not for nothing that God has told us, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. 4:8). Not only is there in all the promises a particular respect unto personal, vital, and practical "godliness," but it is that very godliness which, pre-eminently, gives the saint an especial interest in those promises.

Alas, how many there are today who imagine that if they have "faith," it is sure to be well with them at the end, even though they are not holy. Under the pretence of honouring faith, Satan, as an angel of light, has deceived, and is still deceiving, multitudes of souls. But when their "faith" be examined and tested, what is it worth? Nothing at all so far as insuring an entrance into Heaven is concerned: it is a powerless, lifeless, and fruitless thing; it is nothing better than that faith which the demons have (James 2:19). The faith of God's elect is unto "the acknowledgement of the truth which is after godliness" (Titus 1:1). Saving faith is a "most holy faith" (Jude 20): it is a faith which "purifieth the heart" (Acts 15:9), it is a faith which "worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6), it is a faith which "overcometh the

world” (1 John 5:4), it is a faith which bringeth forth all manner of good works (Heb.11). Let us now enter into detail, and show more specifically wherein lies the necessity for personal holiness.

1. Our Personal holiness is required by the very nature of God. Holiness is the excellence and honour of the Divine character. God is called “rich in mercy” (Eph. 2:4), but “glorious in holiness” (Exod. 15:11): His mercy is His treasure, but holiness is His glory. He swears by this perfection: “Once have I sworn by My holiness” (Psa. 89:35). Over thirty times is He called “The Holy One of Israel.” This is the superlative perfection for which the angels in Heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect do so much admire God, crying “Holy, holy, holy” (1sa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). As gold, because it is the most excellent of the metals, is laid over inferior ones, so this Divine excellency is laid upon all connected with Him: His sabbath is “holy” (Exod. 16:33), His sanctuary is “holy” (Exod. 15:13), His name is “holy” (Psa. 99:3), all His works are “holy” (Psa. 145:17). Holiness is the perfection of all His glorious attributes: His power is holy power, His mercy is holy mercy, His wisdom is holy wisdom.

Now the ineffable purity of the Divine nature is everywhere in the Scriptures made the fundamental reason for the necessity of holiness in us. God makes the holiness of His own nature the ground of His demand for holiness in His people: “For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy” (Lev. 11:4). The same fundamental principle is transferred to the Gospel, “But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of behaviour; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy” (1 Pet. 1:15, 16). Thus God plainly lets us know that His nature is such as, unless we be sanctified, there can be no intercourse between Him and us. “For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy” (Lev. 11:45). Without personal holiness the relationship cannot be maintained that He should be our God and we should

be His people.

God is “of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity” (Hab. 1:13). Such is the infinite purity of His nature, that God cannot take any pleasure in lawless rebels, filthy sinners, the workers of iniquity. Joshua told the people plainly that if they continued in their sins, they could not serve the Lord, “for He is a holy God” (Joshua 24:19). All the service of unholy people toward such a God is utterly lost and thrown away, because it is ‘entirely inconsistent with His nature to accept of it. The apostle Paul reasons in the same manner when he says, “Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:28, 29). He lays his argument for the necessity of grace and holiness in the worship of God from the consideration of the holiness of His nature, which, as a consuming fire will devour that which is unsuited unto and inconsistent with it.

He who resolveth not to be holy must seek another god to worship and serve, for with the God of Scripture he will never find acceptance. The heathen of old realized this, and liking not to retain the knowledge of the true God in their hearts and minds (Rom. 1:28), and resolving to give up themselves unto all filthiness with greediness, they stifled their notions of the Divine Being and invented such “gods” to themselves, as were unclean and wicked, that they might freely conform unto and serve them with satisfaction. God Himself declares that men of corrupt lives have some secret hopes that He is not holy: “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee” (Psa. 50:21). Others, today, while professing to believe in God’s holiness, have such false ideas of His grace and mercy that they suppose He will accept them though they are unholy.

“Be ye holy, for I am holy.” Why? Because herein consists our conformity to God. We were originally created in the image and likeness of God, and that, for the substance of it, was holiness—therein consisted the privilege, blessedness, pre-eminence of man over all the lower creatures. Wherefore,

without this conformity unto God, with the impress of His image and likeness upon the soul, we cannot stand in that relation unto God which was designed us in our creation. This we lost by the entrance of sin, and if there be not a way for us to acquire it again, we shall forever come short of the glory of God and the end of our creation. Now this is done by our becoming holy, for therein consists the renovation of God's image in us (Eph. 4:22-24 and compare with Col. 3:10). It is utterly vain for any man to expect an interest in God, while he does not earnestly endeavour after conformity to Him.

To be sanctified is just as requisite as to be justified. He that thinks to come to enjoyment of God without holiness, makes Him an unholy God, and puts the highest indignity imaginable upon Him. There is no other alternative: we must either leave our sins, or our God. We may as easily reconcile Heaven and Hell, as easily take away all difference between light and darkness, good and evil, as procure acceptance for unholy persons with God. While it be true that our interest in God is not built upon our holiness, it is equally true that we have none without it. Many have greatly erred in concluding that, because piety and obedience are not meritorious, they can get to Heaven without them. The free grace of God towards sinners by Jesus Christ by no means renders holiness needless and useless. Christ is not the minister of sin, but the maintainer of God's glory. He has not purchased for His people security in sin, but salvation from sin.

According to our growth in likeness unto God are our approaches unto glory. Each day both writer and reader is drawing nearer the end of his earthly course, [A. W. Pink finished his earthly course on July 15, 1952] and we do greatly deceive ourselves if we imagine that we are drawing nearer to Heaven, while following those courses which lead only to Hell. We are woefully deluded if we suppose that we are journeying towards glory, and yet are not growing in grace. The believer's glory, subjectively considered, will be his likeness to Christ (1 John 3:2), and it is the very height of folly for any to think that

they shall love hereafter what now they hate. There is no other way of growing in the likeness of God but in holiness: thereby alone are we “changed into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18)—that is, from one degree of glorious grace to another, until by one last great change shall issue all grace and holiness in eternal glory.

But is not God ready to pardon and receive the greatest and vilest sinner who comes unto Him by Christ? Is not His mercy so great and His grace so free that He will do so apart from any consideration of worth or righteousness of their own? If so, why insist so much on the indispensability of holiness? ‘This objection, though thousands of years old, is still made. If men must be holy, then carnal reasoners can see no need of grace: and they cannot see how God is gracious if men perish because they are unholy. Nothing seems more reasonable to carnal minds than that we may live in sin because grace has abounded. This is met by the apostle in Rom. 6:1, where he subjoins the reasons why, notwithstanding the superaboundings of grace in Christ, there is an indispensable necessity why all believers should be holy. Without the necessity of holiness in us, grace would be disgraced. Note how when He proclaimed His name “gracious and merciful,” the Lord at once added, “and will by no means clear the guilty” i.e. those who go on in their sins without regard unto obedience.

2. Our personal holiness is required by the commands of God. Not only is this so under the covenant of works, but the same is inseparably annexed under the covenant of grace. No relaxation unto the duty of holiness is granted by the Gospel, nor any indulgence unto the least sin. The Gospel is no less holy than the Law, for both proceeded from the Holy One; and though provision be made for the pardon of a multitude of sins and for the acceptance of the Christian’s imperfect obedience, yet the standard of righteousness is not lowered, for there is no abatement given by the Gospel unto any duty of holiness nor any license unto the least sin. The difference between those covenants is twofold: under that of works, all the duties of

holiness were required as our righteousness before God, that we might be justified thereby (Rom 10:5)—not so under grace; no allowance was made for the least degree of failure (James 2:10)—but, now, through the mediation of Christ, justice and mercy are joined together.

Under the Gospel commands for universal holiness, respect is required unto three things. First, unto the authority of Him who gives them. Authority is that which obligates unto obedience: see Mal. 1:6. Now He who commands us to be holy is our sovereign Lawgiver, with absolute right to prescribe that which He pleases, and therefore a non-compliance is a despising of the Divine Legislator. To be under God’s command to be holy, and then not to sincerely and earnestly endeavour always and in all things so to be, is to reject His sovereign authority over us, and to live in defiance of Him. No better than that is the state of every one who does not make the pursuit of holiness his daily and chief concern. Forgetfulness of this, or failure to heed it as we ought, is the chief reason of our careless walking. Our great safeguard is to keep our hearts and minds under a sense of the sovereign authority of God in his commands.

Second, we must keep before our minds the power of Him who commands us to be holy. “There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy” (James 4:12). God’s commanding authority is accompanied with such power that He will eternally reward the obedient and eternally punish the disobedient. The commands of God are accompanied with promises of eternal bliss on the one hand, and of eternal misery on the other; and this will most certainly befall us according as we shall be found holy or unholy. Herein is to be seen a further reason for the indispensable necessity of our being holy: if we are not, then a holy and all-powerful God will damn us. A due respect unto God’s promises and threatenings is a principal part of spiritual liberty: “I am the almighty God: walk before Me, and be thou perfect” (Gen. 17:1): the way to walk uprightly is to ever bear in mind that He who requires it of us is Almighty God, under whose eyes we are continually. If, then, we value our souls, let

us seek grace to act accordingly.

Third, respect is to be had unto the infinite wisdom and goodness of God. In His commands God not only maintains His sovereign authority over us, but also exhibits His righteousness and love. His commands are not the arbitrary edicts of a capricious despot, but the wise decrees of One who has our good at heart. His commands “are not grievous” (1 John 5:3): they are not tyrannical restraints of our liberty, but are just, wholesome, and highly beneficial. It is to our great advantage to comply with them; it is for our happiness, both now and hereafter, that we obey them. They are a heavy burden only unto those who desire to be the slaves of sin and Satan: they are easy and pleasant unto all who walk with God. Love for God carries with it a desire to please Him, and from Christ may be obtained that grace which will assist us thereto—but of this, more later.

3. Our personal holiness is required by the Mediation of Christ. One principal end of the design of God in sending His Son into the world was to recover us unto that state of holiness which we had lost: “For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil” (1 John 3:8). Among the principal of the works of the Devil was the infecting of our natures and persons with a principle of sin and enmity against God, and that evil work is not destroyed but by the introduction of a principle of holiness and obedience. The image of God in us was defaced by sin; the restoration of that image was one of the main purposes of Christ’s mediation. Christ’s great and ultimate design was to bring His people unto the enjoyment of God to His eternal glory, and this can only be by grace and holiness, by which we are made “meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.”

Now the exercise of Christ’s mediation is discharged under His threefold office. As to His priestly, the immediate effects were the making of satisfaction and reconciliation, but the mediate effects are our justification and sanctification: “Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good

works” (Titus 2:14)—no *unholy* people, then, have any sure evidence of an interest in Christ’s sacrifice. As to His prophetic office, this consists in His revelation to us of God’s love and will: to make God known and to bring us into subjection unto Him. At the very beginning of His prophetic ministry we find Christ restoring *the Law* to its original purity—purging it from the corruptions of the Jews: Matt. 5. As to His kingly office, He subdues our lusts and supplies power for obedience. It is by these things we are to test ourselves. To live in known and allowed sin, and yet expect to be saved by Christ is the master deception of Satan.

From which of Christ’s offices do I expect advantage? Is it from His *priestly*? Then has His blood cleansed me? Have I been made holy thereby? Have I been redeemed out of the world by it? Am I by it dedicated to God and His service? Is it from His prophetic office? Then have I effectually learned of Him to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world?” (Titus 2:12). Has He instructed me unto sincerity in all my ways, in all my dealings with God and men? Is it from His *Kingly* office? Then does He *actually* rule in me and over me? Has He delivered me from the power of Satan and caused me to take *His* yoke upon me? Has His sceptre broken the dominion of sin in me? Am I a loyal subject of His kingdom? If not, I have no rightful claim to a personal interest in His sacrifice. Christ died to procure holiness, not to secure an indulgence for unholiness.

4. Our personal holiness is required in order to the glory of Christ. If we are indeed His disciples, He has bought us with a price, and we are “not our own,” but His, and that to glorify Him in soul and body because they are His: 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. He died for us that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him who redeemed us at such fearful cost. How, then, are we to do this? *In our holiness* consists the principal part of that revenue of honour which the Lord Jesus requires and expects from His disciples in this world. Nothing glorifies Him so much as our obedience; nothing is a greater grief and reproach to Him

than our disobedience. We are to witness before the world unto the holiness of His life, the heavenliness of His doctrine, the preciousness of His death, by a daily walk which “shows forth HIS praises” (1 Peter 2:9). This is absolutely necessary if we are to glorify Him in this scene of His rejection.

Nothing short of the *life* of Christ is our *example*: this is what the Christian is called to “follow.” It is the life of Christ which it is his duty to express in his own, and he who takes up Christianity on any other terms woefully deceives his soul. No more effectual reproach can be cast upon the blessed name of the Lord Jesus than for His professing people to follow the lusts of the flesh, be conformed to this world, and heed the behests of Satan. We can only bear witness for the Saviour as we make His doctrine our rule, His glory our concern, His example our practice. Christ is honoured not by wordy expressions, but by a holy conversation. Nothing has done more to bring the Gospel of Christ into reproach than the wicked lives of those who bear His name. If I am not living a holy and obedient life this shows that I am not “for” Christ, but against Him. (N. B. Much in this article is a condensation of John Owen on the same subject, Volume 3, of his works.)

The first of seven booklets.

